



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF PEST RISK ANALYSIS FOR THE IMPORTATION OF DRAGON FRUIT FROM VIETNAM

WASHINGTON, May 8, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced the availability of a pest risk analysis, for review and comment, evaluating the risk associated with the importation of dragon fruit from Vietnam under the agency's streamlined process.

Based on the analysis, APHIS determined that dragon fruit from Vietnam can be safely imported to the continental United States subject to one or more of the five designated phytosanitary measures under the notice-based approval process, and are therefore eligible for the streamlined approach. If approved for import, the dragon fruit would have to be part of a commercial shipment and treated with irradiation in accordance with the regulations. The fruit would also have to be inspected jointly by APHIS and the national plant protection organization of Vietnam and accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. Lastly, dragon fruit would be subject to inspection at the port of entry.

In July 2007, USDA published a final rule that streamlined an approval process for importing certain fruits and vegetables under what is known as the Quarantine 56 (Q56) regulations. Q56 pertains to the prohibitions and restrictions concerning the importation of fruits and vegetables into the United States. While this new process continues to provide stringent protections for U.S. agriculture, it employs notices rather than lengthier rulemaking to solicit public involvement in the approval process. It is a less time-consuming approach that allows USDA plant health specialists to focus on more complex domestic and import issues.

Under the new process, a commodity becomes eligible if the risk analysis demonstrates that it can be brought safely into the United States subject to one or more of the five designated phytosanitary measures. The measures include port-of-entry inspection; approved postharvest treatment; a phytosanitary certificate verifying that the commodity originated from a pest-free area; as well as a phytosanitary certificate verifying that the commodity is free from a specified pest or pests or that the risk associated with the commodity can be mitigated through commercial practices. A notice announcing the availability of the pest risk analysis then is published in the *Federal Register* with the opportunity for public comment.

After the comment period ends, all comments are considered and if appropriate, a notice is published in the *Federal Register* announcing that USDA will begin issuing import permits for the commodity.

To learn more about the revisions made to USDA's fruit and vegetable regulations, go to www.aphis.usda.gov and click on "more" then scroll to the Quarantine 56 hot issues link.

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This notice is scheduled for publication in the May 9 *Federal Register*.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before July 8. Send an original and two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0065, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0065>.

Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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